

THE 50+ Connection

NEWS and EVENTS from the
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

A Publication of the Department of Community Resources and Services

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Howard County Ombudsmen protect residents' rights

A Long-Term Care Ombudsman is an advocate for residents living in assisted living and skilled nursing facilities. First authorized by an Older Americans Act amendment in 1978, there are now more than 1,300 staff Ombudsmen and 5,000 volunteer Ombudsmen nationwide.

The Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) ombudsmen advocate for Howard County residents living in a long-term care setting, or their power-of-attorney or guardian, to investigate concerns and resolve complaints. "Serving as an advocate for Howard County residents who live in nursing homes and assisted living facilities is a privilege," says Katy Lee, manager of OAI's Ombudsman Program. "While we cannot fix every problem, we recognize even small improvements can make a difference in a resident's care and quality of life."

Anyone can file a complaint, but an Ombudsman never acts without the consent of the resident. Even if a power-of-attorney is in effect, the resident may still have the right to make decisions. Common concerns include:

- Quality of care
- Improper eviction or inadequate discharge planning
- Administration and organization of medications
- Call bell response time
- Inadequate staffing/poor staff attitudes
- Assistance with toileting or incontinence care
- Quality, quantity and choices of food
- Lack of respect for residents
- Inadequate therapy services

OAI ombudsmen also educate individuals about their rights as residents of a long-term care facility, as well as federal and state regulations, programs and services available to them and strategies for self-advocacy. Ombudsmen make unannounced visits to assisted living and skilled nursing facilities and meet with residents to discuss their quality of care. "Sometimes we might be the only one who will take time to fully listen to them," says OAI Ombudsman Chris Hobbs. "That makes our work meaningful and impactful and keeps us engaged even in challenging situations."

To contact the Howard County Ombudsman Program, call 410-313-6423, email LTCombudsman@howardcountymd.gov or visit <http://howardcountymd.gov/ombudsman>. Take advantage of the opportunity to support OAI's team as a volunteer ombudsman.

You CAN make a difference!
Consider joining us as a **Volunteer Ombudsman** today.
CONTACT **Chris Hobbs**
chobbs@howardcountymd.gov



Howard County
Office on Aging and Independence



A message from Howard County Executive

Calvin Ball

Summer is officially here, and we are celebrating it during National Recreation and Parks Month, this July. It's the perfect time to highlight all our outstanding state-of-the-art outdoor facilities in Howard County. Our team at Recreation and Parks maintains 9,768 acres and more than 50 developed parks! We are continually improving accessibility to our parks so that everyone of all ages and abilities can enjoy.



Our popular, free summer concert series returns to Centennial Park at 7:00 p.m. in July. These family-friendly events kick off with Reverend Smackmaster and the Congregation of Funk on July 12, followed by the Columbia Big Band which brings us the sounds of jazz and swing on July 19. Then, Damon Foreman & Blue Funk complete the month with their funk, blues, and rock on July 26.

We know our parks are some of the best places to enjoy nature and get exercise, no matter your age, and we are working hard to ensure they offer the best resources and amenities. Huntington Park in Columbia is currently undergoing renovations. New features will include a basketball court, soft-ball/baseball backstop, paved paths, water fountain, park benches, and more. Our very popular Patuxent Trail will be upgraded to increase accessibility. It will be receiving a \$1.65 million grant to renovate the surface of the 1.3-mile dirt and gravel section in Savage and Kings Contrivance.

This summer, I encourage you to soak up the sunshine by visiting one of our many amenity-filled outdoor spaces. Stay safe and have fun!



The Department of Community Resources and Services (DCRS) just launched a new podcast, HoCo Community Chat! Give a listen as DCRS Director Jackie Scott tells our story and how we assist Howard County residents. The debut episode features an "Aging Outloud" segment, too. Check it out at www.howardcountymd.gov/HoCoCommunityChat.

Howard County 50+ CENTERS

Enrichment. Engagement. Connection. Growth.

July Featured Events

Walk the local trails with 50+ Center and library staff

EAST COLUMBIA 50+ CENTER

Mondays, 9:30 a.m.

Join us on a brisk walk on local trails surrounding the East Columbia campus (rain or shine). Meet in the lobby of the library.

Free; no registration required

What is "Senior Planet"?

NORTH LAUREL 50+ CENTER

July 12, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

OAI has partnered with Senior Planet from AARP to help older adults learn new technology skills. Meet Digital Inclusion Specialist, Malarie Burgess, to learn more about the program, and sign-up for FREE class!

Jazz dance class

ELLCOTT CITY 50+ CENTER

Wednesdays, July 12 to August 16 / A02445.401

Learn simple jazz techniques – isolation movements, jazz walks, step ball changes, jazz squares, slides, cross steps, and more, in choreographed combinations. Cost: \$48/six classes. Register on ActiveNet.

Robinson Nature Center naturalist program

ELKRIDGE 50+ CENTER

July 19, 11:00 a.m. / A05607.400

Learn about the wildlife found in our backyards. Examine and learn about animal skeletons, feathers, pelts, and possibly even some live animals! Free; register on ActiveNet.

Shortcakes and fruit cooking demo

GLENWOOD 50+ CENTER

July 20, 2:00 p.m. / A03603.400

Enjoy a hands-on workshop and learn to make two types of shortcakes, topped with fruit and homemade whipped cream. Cost: \$10. Register on ActiveNet.

How emotions affect health

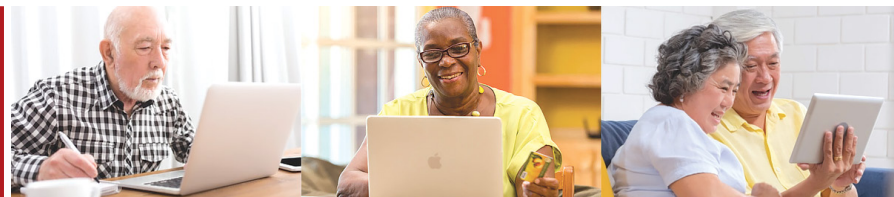
BAIN 50+ CENTER

July 26, 11:00 a.m.

Sharon Burns, RN, BSN, MA, holistic practitioner, will discuss the correlation between disease and emotions. Learn the function of the seven Chakras, the energy centers which maintain the health of specific organs and bodily functions. Free; register at front desk.

To register or find more events, visit

<https://anc.apm.activecommunities.com/howardcounty/>



Connect . Engage . Explore

Enroll in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

EAST COLUMBIA 50+ CENTER

6600 Cradlerock Way, Columbia 21045

July 27, 1:30 to 4 p.m. / Appointments required

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission benefit program that helps ensure households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare, and more. OAI encourages all qualifying older adult Howard County residents register for an appointment with a specialist to enroll in the ACP program. For appointments, call 410-313-6542.

Safeguard your summer travel plans



Planning a worry-free vacation can be difficult and time-consuming. As you arrange for hotels and transportation, work with travel agents, booking sites and tour operators, keep in mind the cancellation policies or laws which apply, and check other variables which can make your travel plans unravel. The Howard County Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) offers tips to help you plan your summer travel. Visit <https://bit.ly/OCPtraveltips> to learn more.

Take advantage of NEW
50+ CENTER HOURS
Visit www.howardcountymd.gov/50pluscenters
for details.



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